



PRESS RELEASE

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PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR FRANK STRAUB ADDRESSES U.S. CONGRESSIONAL SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS ABOUT RECIDIVISM

INDIANAPOLIS – Public Safety Director Frank Straub was among the national experts invited to speak on January 27 at the first national summit on “justice reinvestment” in Washington DC. “Justice Reinvestment” is an approach that uses data-driven, fiscally responsible policies and practices to increase public safety and reduce recidivism and corrections spending.

Straub joined a bipartisan group of congressional and state leaders and authorities on criminal justice policy to improve how taxpayer dollars are spent to make communities safer.

In the past 20 years, spending on corrections has grown at a faster rate than every other state budget category except Medicaid, increasing from more than \$12 billion in 1988 to more than \$50 billion in 2008. The Pew Center on the States reports that more than 1 in 100 American adults are now behind bars.

“We can be tough on crime, but still be smarter about how we use our resources,” said Public Safety Director Frank Straub. “Ready or not, most people in our state prisons will eventually return to the community. Each year approximately 5,000 individuals are released from prison back into Marion County. If we help these individuals to be more successful, we can reduce their chances for committing new crimes.”

Despite this tremendous expenditure on prisons, recidivism rates remain high. In many states, half of all individuals released from state prison are reincarcerated within three years. As a result, state policymakers are increasingly looking for alternatives to expensive prison expansion and construction that can more effectively increase public safety—including investments in prisoner reentry and other measures to reduce recidivism.

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In his remarks, Straub noted the key role of law enforcement. “The police are the beginning and end of the reentry process,” he said, adding that along with other agencies, the police can help ensure that people released from prison or jail are returning to stable environments.

Congressmen Alan B. Mollohan (D-WV) and Frank Wolf (R-VA) suggested the summit and were joined by their colleagues Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), in addition to leaders from the U.S. Department of Justice and experts in state government, law enforcement, courts, corrections and community reentry.

The summit was convened by the Pew Center on the States, the U.S. Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Public Welfare Foundation, and the Council of State Governments Justice Center.

For more information about the summit, see www.justicecenter.csg.org/federalstrategy.

The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center is a national nonprofit organization that serves policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels from all branches of government. It provides practical, nonpartisan advice and consensus-driven strategies—informed by available evidence—to increase public safety and strengthen communities. To learn more about the justice reinvestment approach, see www.justicereinvestment.org. For more about the CSG Justice Center, see www.justicecenter.csg.org.

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